

On Monday, I visited Naval Station Great Lakes for the commissioning ceremony of “Battle Stations 21,” the Navy’s new true-to-life training simulator.

Inside a new \$82 million facility floats the USS Trayer, a 210-foot-long guided-missile destroyer. The USS Trayer is designed to be the unluckiest ship in the Navy. Each night fires and floods will break out on the ship to prepare the 352 recruits on board for any disaster that could take place at sea.

To build this “ship-in-a-bottle,” the Navy brought in experts from around the fleet, including Master Chief James Parlier. Master Chief Parlier served as the USS Cole’s top enlisted officer in 2000 at the time of an al-Qaeda terrorist attack. His office was just a short distance away from the blast. As a medical corpsman for 21 years, he played a key role in saving the ship and its crew. He went on to serve as the Command Master Chief of Great Lakes during the construction of Battle Stations 21. His experiences and work on Battle Stations will help ensure that if sailors are faced with an attack or accident, it will be for the second time thanks to their training at Great Lakes.

It is only fitting that the world’s greatest Navy has the best training simulator possible. I know that our allies in NATO and throughout the world will be eager to visit the state-of-the-art experience that the Navy’s only boot camp provides.

You can read more about Battle Stations [here](#) or at the [Navy’s Web site](#) . Complete [ship specifications](#) and an [image gallery](#) are also available.



Congressman Kirk speaks at the commisioning ceremony for the USS Trayer



Beag Assistant Administrator of Battle Stations 21, presents



The USS Trayer, housed in a 157,000 square-foot building at Naval Station Great Lakes



Navy recruits battle a fire during one of the 17 scenarios on the ship



Recruits train during a compartment flooding exercise